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NOTES

I. MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

AMERICAN CITIES

New York City.—*Tenement House Report.* The report of the Tenement House Commissioner, Robert W. de Forest, contains a record of the splendid work carried on by the department during the year. The scope of the work done is well described in a summarized statement issued by the department.

"On January 1, 1902, a new department of the city government, known as the Tenement House Department, was created. Since that time all the tenement houses in New York have been examined and their condition ascertained.

"Tenement conditions in many instances have been found to be so bad as to be indescribable in print; vile privies and privy sinks; foul cellars full of rubbish, in many cases of garbage and decomposing fecal matter; dilapidated and dangerous stairs; plumbing pipes containing large holes, emitting sewer gas throughout the houses; rooms so dark that one cannot see the people in them; cellars occupied as sleeping-places; dangerous bakeries without proper protection in case of fire; pigs, goats, horses and other animals kept in cellars; dangerous old fire-traps without fire-escapes; disease-breeding rags and junk stored in tenement houses; halls kept dark at night, endangering the lives and safety of the occupants; buildings without adequate water-supply—the list might be added to almost indefinitely. The cleansing of the Augean stables was a small task compared to the cleansing of New York's 82,000 tenement houses, occupied by nearly three millions of people representing every nationality and every degree in the social scale. The task that confronted the department was not, however, limited to this. Without organization, without employees, with all its problems before it, it was on the very day that it came into existence confronted with an organized and vigorous attack in the legislature upon the fundamental principles of the law for whose enforcement it was created.

"Without previous records, with almost no information in regard to the condition of the existing tenement houses, it was called upon to carry out an important and far-reaching scheme for their improvement, involving the structural alteration of over 40,000 buildings.

"In the period under consideration in this report a new branch of the city government has been organized, its machinery created and a force of about 400 employees trained, disciplined and educated; far-reaching and important advances in legislation have been secured as a result of the department's action, and radical and vicious attempts to break down the tenement laws defeated. Living accommodations for 16,768 families, or 83,840 persons, have been provided in sanitary, comfortable and decent houses, each

one of which has been built according to law; notorious evasion of and non-compliance with the laws have given place to their complete, uniform and impartial enforcement; the evil of prostitution has been practically abolished in the tenement houses; 337,246 inspections have been made; 55,055 violations filed; 21,584 repairs made to plumbing; 13,617 water-closets cleaned; 11,611 accumulations of filth removed from cellars and other parts of such buildings; 13,732 ceilings cleaned; 15,364 walls cleaned; 10,060 unsafe wooden floors removed from iron fire-escapes and new iron floors substituted; 1,701 fire-escapes erected on buildings that before were without this protection. The registration of 44,500 owners' names has been secured, thus fixing the responsibility for bad conditions in the tenements; contagious disease has been checked and prevented; 32,825 citizens' complaints have been investigated and the conditions complained of remedied; and an important tabulation and presentation of the population in every tenement-house block in the borough of Manhattan has been prepared that will be of incalculable value to the city.

"The existing tenement houses have been frequently and systematically inspected; foul cellars have had the accumulated filth of years removed; defective and unsanitary plumbing which has apparently existed for long periods has been remedied; houses unfit for human habitation vacated; hundreds of houses have been radically reconstructed and improved; light has been let into dark rooms; vile yard privies and privy sinks have been removed and the whole sanitary condition of the city raised to a higher standard. The results of this work are clearly reflected in the reduced death-rate, which in 1902 was 18.7 as compared with 20.0 in 1901, and in the first eight months of 1903 has been reduced to 18.0."

*Passenger Transportation.*¹ In response to the popular agitation for better car service begun by the suburban population of New York during the closing months of 1902, much has been done by the rapid transit companies to improve the means of communication with the business centers. The enlargement of the transfer system, together with the opening of new lines, and the increased number of cars operated, have relieved, in a measure, the extreme overcrowding of the surface lines. The new cars which the Board of Railroad Commissioners² directed the companies to put on are nearly all in service, and many of the old cars have been remodeled. A more definite time schedule has also been introduced, thus insuring a higher degree of safety and comfort to every passenger. However, many of the stations are too small, and are kept in an unsanitary condition, wider and more direct stairways being needed. At present the attention of the traveling public is directed toward the inadequacy of the street-car service. During the rush hour, above 30 per cent of the passengers on the Lexington avenue line are compelled to stand. Although the percentage of standing passengers on other lines is somewhat less, the overcrowding is sufficient to cause great inconvenience to all passengers.

¹ Communication from W. W. Pierson, Chicago, Ill.

² Report in the Matter of the Transportation Problem in Greater New York Before the Board of Railroad Commissioners of the State of New York, Albany, June 30, 1903.

Vehicular traffic, standing vehicles, and building operations that are allowed to encroach upon the street are the greatest obstacles to a more efficient service, although a strict enforcement of the ordinances already enacted by the city would obviate this difficulty. The Report of the Merchants' Association of New York³ shows conclusively that more cars of a larger type, if equipped with a power brake, could be handled with safety over all the lines.

The subway system⁴ presents a better and more commodious means of transportation, and to it the public must look for a solution of the present transportation problem. As regards surface traction, the city has been exploited by private interest, but underground New York is still under complete municipal control. If permanent relief from present abuses is to be expected from this source, the city must exercise careful control over any franchises that may be granted to subway companies through its ability to lease or operate as it may see fit. The competition which such an underground system would occasion would bring the syndicates in control of the surface lines to their knees. Until the city exercises adequate control, the present evils will continue to exist. The difficulty of the problem lies in the fact that transportation facilities have not kept pace with the increase of population.

Cleveland.⁵—*Municipal Ownership.* At the election of November 3 there were submitted to the voters six proposals for the issuance of bonds. Five of these proposals looked to the erection of bridges and the improvement and extension of streets, parks and boulevards. The sixth provides for the issuance of bonds "in the sum of \$400,000 for the purpose of erecting electric light works and for supplying light to the corporation and the inhabitants thereof." 24,328 votes were cast in favor of the proposition and 30,501 against it. The statutes require, for the approval of bond issues, an affirmative vote of two-thirds of all those voting on the proposition.

Various causes have been assigned for the decisive condemnation of this measure. A consideration which did not go to the merits of the question of municipal ownership, but which doubtless contributed to the result, was the fact that the proposed electric light works were intended to supply but one section of the city, while the bonds would be a lien upon all property. Nor would the fund realized from this bond issue have been sufficient fully to equip a plant. A large additional issue would subsequently have been called for. The city was flooded with literature maintaining that such a move would be inexpedient, costly and ill-timed. Furthermore, it is doubtful if sentiment in this city is so pronouncedly in favor of the principle of municipal ownership as in many other of our cities. The measure was also,

³ Passenger Transportation Service in the City of New York. A Report to the Merchants' Association of New York by Its Committee on Engineering and Sanitation. Merchants' Association of New York, September, 1903.

⁴ Report on Passenger Transportation System of New York by "City Plan Committee" of Municipal Art Society. Bulletin No. 3.

⁵ Communication of F. E. Stevens, Esq., Secretary Municipal Association, Cleveland, Ohio.

to a great extent, a party issue and shared the defeat of the party advocating it.

Profitable Use of Water Meters. Cleveland's water-works system is owned by the city. During the past two years great economies in operation have been effected through the installation of water meters. A peculiarity attaching to this new economy of management is that it is satisfactory both from the point of view of the department and also from that of the consumer. The inauguration of this enterprise was largely inspired by Professor E. W. Bemis, superintendent of the water works, and it has been carried on under his supervision.

During the twenty-six years prior to 1902, nearly all the business premises, but the business premises alone, were supplied with meters, making a total at the close of 1901 of 3,540 meters out of 55,130 "services." The consumption of water was, however, increasing much faster than the population. While the population increased 46 per cent during the period from 1891 to 1901, the pumpage of water had increased 150 per cent. The per capita consumption had increased from 111 gallons per day to 169 gallons. Among the reasons which led to the conclusion that the adoption of a meter system was advisable, was the belief that there was an enormous waste of water; that the cost of purchasing and placing meters would be much less than the cost of extensions of the water-works system, including new pumps, additional tunnels under the lake, etc., and the realization that fairness demanded that consumers should pay in proportion to the amount consumed. Two years' experience has demonstrated that the first two beliefs were justified. The third belief needed no substantiation from the argument of experience. During 1902, 7,739 meters were set. During the first ten months of 1903 11,938 meters were set. On the first of November of 1903 the city had metered 23,000 out of 58,000 connections in use.

The efficacy of meters in the reduction of waste is demonstrated by the following figures: In 1894 the department pumped 32.5 per cent more water than in 1891; in 1897 the pumpage was 22.5 per cent more than in 1894; in 1900 it was 38.7 per cent more than in 1897. But during the first ten months of 1903 it was 7.5 per cent less than in 1900, making a difference in favor of this last period of more than 45 per cent. Records of the department indicate that the per capita consumption this year will be under 145 as compared with 169 in 1901. The receipts of the department show a large gain. This arises principally from the fact that while the small consumer has been paying less for the service, the large consumer has been paying for what he has received. The plan is operated under a system of minimum rates. For example,—those whose assessment rate was formerly \$7.00 per year must pay \$4.00. The use of meters has not, as might at first be supposed, encouraged a niggardly and unsanitary economy in the use of water. The \$4.00 minimum permits the use of seven barrels of water per day. The rate for water consumed in excess of the amount allowed by the minimum rate is 5½ cents per thousand gallons, or six barrels for one cent. The economy has been effected by the stoppage of waste. The placing of meters is compulsory, but it is done at the expense of the city.

Denver Franchises.⁶—The people of Denver have a special interest in the subject of franchises granted to companies controlling public utilities. Conditions are such that the public may suffer as much—if not more—than the corporations. Denver is a composite city; its various units in the days of their independence granted a variety of franchises covering the more important utilities. But, as the city consolidated, there was a reorganization and consolidation of the companies holding these franchises. One company now owns all the gas and electric-lighting franchises; another, the water; and a third, the street railway. There is, however, uniformity in the water and tramway franchises to the extent that they are limited as to time and space. The water franchises will expire by 1910, and the tramway by 1911. The companies owning these franchises are permitted to enter specific streets and alleys; any extension must be by special vote of the council for specified places. The electric light company claims an unlimited franchise for the whole city of Denver, yet it will require a decision of the court to determine its rights.

The Rush amendment to the constitution of Colorado, which attempts to guarantee municipal home-rule, provides for a charter convention of twenty-one members who must prepare, and submit to the people, a charter that requires all franchises, "relating to any street, alley or public place," to be submitted to "a vote of the qualified taxpaying electors," after the company has deposited with the treasurer the estimated cost of the election. One charter carrying this requirement to a logical extreme has been overwhelmingly defeated, but no charter that omits this requirement can be submitted to the people. When the charter is finally adopted, the companies will not ask for extension of franchises unless the people to be benefited pay the expenses of an election, which will be a great burden in a city of 175,000 people. The natural outcome will be, the growth of the city will at once be limited to streets along which the companies already possess rights. The suburban parts will suffer most.

The object of the author of the Rush amendment seems to have been to make it easy to force municipal ownership of utilities. The first proposed charter carried out this idea by making private ownership as precarious as possible. The charter was defeated by the combined interests of the present office-holders, who hold over until the new charter goes into effect, the whiskey interests and the corporations. Yet it is evident that municipal ownership is losing ground with the independent, thinking voters. This is shown by the editorials of the papers that support municipal ownership, and the publications of the "Non-Partisan Charter League."

Cuba.—*Municipal Affairs.*⁷ Title 12 of the constitution of Cuba provides for the reorganization of the municipalities of the island. The first important change provided for is the separation of the legislative and executive powers, the mayor no longer being a member of the municipal council. As regards municipal functions, article 105 of the constitution gives to the

⁶ Communication of Professor Frank H. H. Roberts, University of Denver, Denver, Col.

⁷ Communication of Hon. F. Carrera y Justiz, Havana, Cuba.

municipalities the right to exercise all functions relating exclusively to the interests of the municipality. In this regard the Cuban constitution follows the system of Continental Europe, namely, that of not attempting to enumerate the powers of the municipalities.

According to articles 103 and 104 of the constitution, the only elective officers of the municipality are the mayor and the members of the council. There is, therefore, no attempt to provide for elective heads of departments as in many cities of the United States. All such administrative officers are appointed by the mayor and council. This system has the very grave defect of dividing responsibility. The logical plan would be to give to the mayor the appointment of all executive officers. Under the Cuban system there are no special municipal charters; although this does not prevent local variations within the limits of the framework of the government prescribed by the constitution, namely, an elective mayor and council.

At the present time the legislature of Cuba is formulating a new municipal law, in which the principles of the constitution are developed in detail. The lower house has formulated and passed such a bill, and the same is now pending in the Senate. The system of municipal government provided for by this bill shows marked traces of Spanish influence. In fact, many provisions of the old system have been incorporated which have been rejected by Spain herself. The recent reform in the Spanish system effected through the efforts of Señor Maura is in many respects an improvement over the bill passed by the Cuban lower house.

It will be well to postpone a scientific analysis of the new system until it receives the approval of the upper house, or has been rejected by it. Suffice it to say that the time has arrived for such an organization of local government in Cuba to arouse local initiative and to develop national prosperity.

FOREIGN CITIES

English Cities.—*Productive Undertakings of Municipal Corporations.*^{*}

On March 31, 1902, out of a total of 317 municipal corporations in England and Wales (excluding London), 299 were carrying on one or more productive undertakings. The population of these 299 boroughs by the census of the preceding year was 13,093,870, and their assessable value for rates, out of which the general expenses of the corporations were defrayed, amounted for the year 1900-1901 to about \$275,000,000.

The rapidity with which municipalities are assuming these lines of activity is evidenced by the fact that from January 1, 1898, to March 31, 1902, seventeen corporations commenced water-supply undertakings, nine gas supply, sixty-two electricity supply, and thirty tramway undertakings. Two hundred and twenty-eight cities, well over two-thirds of the total number, conduct their own markets. The enterprise next most generally undertaken is water works, 193 cities owning their works. Baths and wash-houses come

^{*} Communication of Benjamin C. Marsh, University of Pennsylvania.

next in the list, being operated by 108 municipalities, while only twenty-four have undertaken the task of building and renting working-class dwellings.

A total capital, including borrowed capital, has been provided by the municipalities for these enterprises, amounting to about \$600,000,000. The average annual income of these undertakings for the four years, 1898-1902, amounted to \$63,000,000; the working expenses for the same period were \$41,000,000.

The undertakings which during this period were conducted at a loss were electricity supply, baths and wash-houses, burial grounds, working-class dwellings, harbors, piers, docks and quays. The gas works showed the largest aggregate profit, while the average annual net profit for all the undertakings during the four-year period amounted to £378,281.⁹

The German Municipal Exposition.¹⁰—The object of the German Municipal Exposition held during the past summer at Dresden was twofold:

First. To demonstrate the condition of civic life in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially as regards the development of the larger communities in Germany during the recent years, and to show the progress made in that time in carrying on civic affairs.

Second. To bring together a collection of German trade appliances and manufactures for the requirements of popular civic life.

The exhibits under the first head were divided into eight groups:

I. Street traffic, public lighting, roadway construction and drainage, bridges and harbors, including excavation work, measuring, surveying, street tramways, etc.

II. Town extension, sanitary and tenement inspection.

III. Public artistic work (architecture, painting, sculpture, etc.).

IV. Public health and well-being, constabulary, etc.

V. School education and instruction.

VI. Indoor and outdoor relief of the poor, care of the sick, charitable schemes and endowments.

VII. Control of cash receipts, of finance operations and of public rates and taxes, the trading of city and town councils, land property and savings banks and loan institutions.

VIII. Registration and office appliances, regulation of official staff, statistics and printed reports, etc.

These exhibits were arranged in the permanent exhibition building erected by the city of Dresden at a cost of about \$450,000, and with a floor space of 55,500 square feet.

The machines, building materials and miscellaneous manufactures of the second division were arranged in a number of small buildings around the main exhibition hall, the entire mode of classification being most carefully arranged, so that the lay mind might secure the largest benefit. The value of the exposition to a foreigner, giving as it did a vivid picture in photographs,

⁹ For fuller data see *Municipal Corporations Reproductive Undertakings* brought up to March 31, 1902, in continuation of Parliamentary Paper No. 88, of Session 1899.

¹⁰ Communication of Benjamin C. Marsh, University of Pennsylvania.

models and actual objects of the present-day condition in German cities, lay in its tremendous suggestiveness. Transformed tenements and beautified cities are most important object lessons as to what 128 German cities, with an aggregate population of over thirteen millions, have accomplished in their striving to better conditions. The expenses of the display were guaranteed by the cities in proportion to their population, no provision being made by the central government. An effort has been made by representatives of the State Department to have the entire exposition brought to St. Louis, and it is greatly to be hoped that an appropriation may be made by the directors of that exposition to have the main exhibits there, if the German cities are unable to meet the expense.